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SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT - EDUCATION SECRETARY SPELLINGS' VISIT TO CHILE

¶1. Summary: Press coverage of Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings' visit has been extremely positive. All dailies highlighted the visit with references to the new Ph.D. Equal Opportunity Scholarship Program, which Secretary Rice signed in Washington on August 8. Influential "El Mercurio" noted the importance of the private sector's cooperation in strengthening education. The media also emphasized that English fluency is not an admission requirement, which will enable talented Chilean students to obtain PhDs at U.S. universities after intensive English-language training. End Summary.

¶2. On August 21, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 129,000) ran an interview with Secretary Spellings entitled, "Margaret Spellings: 'Education is strengthening with the commitment of the private sector'"

¶2. Subheadline: "The Secretary is in Santiago to promote new Ph.D. scholarship program for Chileans."

¶3. U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings has had a tight agenda in Chile. Yesterday she met with her counterpart Yasna Provoste, the Dean of the University of Chile Victor Perez, and Foreign Minister Alejandro Foxley. The goal is to promote the "Equal Opportunity Scholarship Program for 100 Chilean students to complete Ph.D. studies in U.S. universities without having English fluency."

¶4. Spellings' delegation includes the presidents of eight universities...and the idea is to increase student exchange in both directions. "We want to find ways to provide English learning (opportunities) for Chilean students and also encourage more of our students to study in Chile. In fact, my daughter studies in South America, in Mendoza. I, therefore, strongly believe in exchange programs," said Spellings.

¶5. Asked what type of student is expected to join the scholarship program, the Secretary said: "Basically students from low-income families or with some English-language disadvantage, but who are very talented. That is why they want to obtain PhDs, especially in science and technology. We also want them to study other disciplines and hope to offer opportunities to the teachers."

¶6. Question: Have the discussions about Chilean teachers going to improve their English skills in the United States moved forward?

¶7. Spellings: "Yes. In fact the Miami Dade College, whose President is here, is one of our leading English and Spanish teaching institutions (...). There are several agreements already, but the important thing here is that this is the first time the U.S.

government is actively a part of these agreements."

¶18. Question: Is cooperation in education a new way for the United States to build ties with the countries of Latin America?

¶19. Spellings: "Of course. We know our neighbors are important and that the knowledge-based economy has no boundaries. I have a friend who says that you can buy in any language, but you have to sell in the buyer's language; It is therefore, important that we learn Spanish and you English."

¶10. Asked about the goal of her meeting with the private sector today, Spellings said: "One of the things we have discovered in our country is that the commitment of the private sector significantly strengthens education, especially in universities. This creates alliances for research and development that allows professors to gain practical experience in the real and private world. The business sector knows that an educated work force is vital to success (...). That is why we want to see how the private sector in Chile is cooperating with education and encourage it to do more."

¶11. Question: What is the image of the Chilean educational system?

¶12. Spellings: "You have a high level of literacy and a long-term commitment to providing access. You have made significant progress in promoting opportunity, not just for the elite. Those are the same issues we are concerned with in the United States. We have a very good impression and that is why we have come, to encourage our students to study here as well as receive students from your country."

¶13. On August 21, conservative, independent on line and Terra.cl "La Tercera" (on-line daily, 8/21): "Chile and U.S. Launch Scholarship Program."

¶14. Chilean Foreign Minister Alejandro Foxley and U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings launched the "Chile-U.S. Equal Opportunities Scholarships" program. The program will allow Chilean professionals to attend the best U.S universities without the English requirement at the time of their application, reported the Foreign Ministry. "With the visit of Secretary Spellings we are launching a program that we signed two weeks ago with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice," Foxley noted. He said that this program will "reward" talent and effort as the fundamental criteria, while not discriminating based on social economic level or the level of English proficiency acquired during school years. Spellings is in Chile with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Academic Affairs Thomas Farrell, leading a delegation of presidents from prestigious U.S. universities."

¶15. On August 21, business and financial "Diario Financiero" (circ. 30,000): In a letter to the editor, a reader praised the program that creates 100 new graduate scholarships, in particular the elimination of English fluency as a requirement. He noted that this policy will make individuals eligible to the program from sectors that were traditionally excluded from the admissions process.

¶16. On August 20, "www.universia.cl: "Ministers of Education from Chile and the U.S. meet to ratify scholarship agreement in the northern country."
The meeting took place with a delegation of Presidents from the most prestigious U.S. universities, which agreed to receive every year 100 youths who do not speak English to do their graduate studies in the United States. During the meeting, Yasna Provoste spoke of the importance of the agreement that will allow that 100 Chilean students can annually do their post-graduate studies in the United States. She said "this agreement of equal opportunities has a strong focus on ensuring equity, so that language is not an impediment for the best students to study in American universities." Secretary Spellings said her interest is that not only Chilean

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students go to the United States, but also for Americans to come to Chile. "The idea is to have more circulation and this is achieved through alliances between countries, because education and innovation have no barriers."

¶17. On August 21, independent, liberal online news service "El Mostrador": "Chile and the U.S. formalize doctorate scholarships without language barriers"

The U.S. Secretary of Education visited Chile to promote the program of post graduate scholarships that seeks to favor qualified students that do not have a good command of English and that in the past were not able to participate in these initiatives.

¶18. Spellings arrived in Chile with a delegation of eight U.S. university presidents and explained her vision for the agreement with Chile, pointing out that favoring low income students is a priority of this program. She said the initiative "seeks equity. Before this agreement, the prerequisites for this kind of scholarship had limiting effects on the kind of student who could participate and, in this case, we want to break this barrier."

¶19. Sara Martinez Tucker from the Department of Education considers this idea as an "opportunity for us too...there is a growth in the Hispanic population and we really don't have any help to establish programs and we hope that the exchange of teachers will be of mutual benefit." On the other hand, the Presidents that are with Spellings have already begun conversations with national education institutions to establish links and create alliances.

¶20. On August 21, "The Santiago Times" headlined: "U.S. Secretary of Education Promotes PHD program in Chile."

¶21. U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings reconfirmed this week promises of U.S. aid and language training for Chilean PhD candidates who opt to do their graduate work at U.S. universities. Spellings said the aim is to promote educational integration between the U.S. and Chile and to provide special help for students from lower income families. The Secretary stressed that the PhD program is just one in a long list of educational initiatives that U.S. and Chilean officials are working to create.

¶22. On August 21, Foreign Relations Ministry website: Foreign Relations Minister and U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings initiate the "Chile-U.S Equal Opportunity Scholarships Program."

¶23. "With the visit of Secretary Spellings, we are beginning a program that we signed two weeks ago with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. It is a program of 100 scholarships a year that we have called equal access or equal opportunity, because in the future, to participate in a doctorate degree program at the best U.S. universities, English will no longer be a barrier.... We have wanted to offer the Foreign Ministry as a platform for delivering the scholarships, because we also believe that a foreign policy should include, as a fundamental theme, the facilitation of exchanges of people who wish to increase their level of knowledge as well as the exchange of scientists and professionals who can transfer practical experience on many subjects."

¶24. On August 21, Ministry of Education website: "Minister Provoste Ratifies Bilateral Educational Agreement with U.S. Secretary of Education."

¶25. Minister of Education Yasna Provoste Campillay and U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings ratified the Equal

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Opportunities Agreement that will allow 100 Chilean students to annually conduct PhD and postgraduate studies in several U.S. universities through 2010. Minister Provoste received the visit of her American counterpart, who is leading a delegation that includes Under Secretary of Education Sara Martinez, and higher education representatives from the states of Louisiana, California, Iowa, Nebraska and Miami.... The U.S. Secretary of Education underscored that this agreement is part of a global community that builds upon these kinds of enriching educational experiences. "We are in a world in which we all need to learn from each other. Therefore, we not only want to have Chilean students come to our country, but also that U.S. students go to Chile. The idea is to achieve a higher circulation which is achieved through alliances with other countries. To us, education and innovation do not have boundaries,"

Spellings said.

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